

COMEDIAN CLARKE.

AN INTERESTING TALK WITH HIM

His Belieft at the Improvements of the Nation
Capital—His Experience as a Manager in
London—Reminiscences of the
Stage and Actors.

In the various announcements made in respect to Mr. John S. Clarke, the eminent comedian, who is playing such a successful engagement at Ford's Opera-House, so great stress is laid upon his London reputation that many of our younger play-goers have an idea that he is a genuine Britisher. This is not the fact by a large majority. Mr. Clarke was born in our sister city of Baltimore; was a play-fellow with Edwin Booth, whose sister he subsequently married, and although he has resided in London for the past thirteen years is still a true American in thought and feeling.

"You don't know," said he, "how delighted am I to see the impression that has been made in Washington since I was last here. Then the spirit of enterprise had just begun to awaken the people to the necessity of improving the Capital City, and all the efforts of the Government were directed in that way; now I return and find it the most beautiful paved city in the world. It makes my bosom thrill with joy that I am an American and that Washington will one day be the magnificent city of the future."

THE REPUBLICAN remarked that Governor Sherrard was digging silver out of the bowels of Mexico.

"Well," said Mr. Clarke, "he has left a monument to his energy and power here that will be lasting; and as to Mexico, I suppose that one of these days that country will become a part of the United States. And, by the way, I think sooner or later Canada will drop into our hands. You find more of our money there now than England."

This style of talk was all very well to show the Americanism of the eminent comedian, but the interviewer didn't intend to wind him up on that subject, so he dexterously changed the topic of conversation by asking Mr. Clarke how it happened that he had been so successful in London when so many American actors had failed in that city.

"I don't know," responded the actor, "unless it was because I adhered strictly to legitimate English plays which they could understand. When I first thought of going to England, a brother actor—for whose opinion generally I have a high re-

Bonelaunt to write you a play with a Yankee character in it, and then you will succeed," told him I would do no such thing. If to mask success it was necessary to go before an English public and present a caricature of my countrymen, I'd be d—blessed if I would go. I resolved to meet the English actors upon their own ground. I opened in *Wellington's Deeds* and then followed it up with *Bob Tyle* in "The School of Reform," and other old English comedies, and I am happy to say that I made a complete success."

"Do you still retain the lease?"

"No; I have given it up. You see, poor Miss Northern, Adelaide Nelson, and myself used to flourish the season; and when Northern and Miss Nelson died I felt that death had taken the two main supports away."

"You meet many of our American actors in London, don't you, especially during the summer time?"

"Yes, a great many. Travel now to Europe

met William Warren there last summer, and he and I visited Stratford-on-Avon together. I also took the same trip with Lawrence Barrett. As for Warren, what a wonderful man he is. I have not seen him act for years, but I am told he is the unfinished artist ever. Indeed, he could not be otherwise, for he carries to his long stage experience and great talents a cultivated intelligence which is unequalled by any comedian on the stage."

Clarke then spoke of those who were ornaments of the stage when he first went to France.

to wit and gone to that great unknown where no part is played, but each made the charms molded by his virtues while here—Davenport, W. Wallace, Dan Seichill, Edwin Adams, Lucille Western, and others, paying a tender tribute to the worth of each. He then inquired of those who have become popular favorites within the last decade—McCullough, Barrett, Mary Anderson, and Jananscheck—and seemed thoroughly gratified that the standard of the stage was still maintained.

"Tell me of Edwin Booth's success in London," said the itemizer.

Booth is a man of the highest intelligence, of good culture, a careful and industrious student, and possessed of earnestness, passion, and force. In this respect he is superior to Irving, who has great earnestness, but no passion or power. Booth is the only heroic tragedian now upon the English-speaking stage."

"Yes, for the summer; but I shall return in the fall and play in New York. It will be a pleasure to again play there. To think of it brings back memories of the old times when Edwin Booth was I used to fill out the season at the Winter Garden. "You have considerable interest in theatrical affairs in Philadelphia, have you not?"

"Yes, I have the old Walnut-street Theatre which is the very oldest theatre in the country and I have also the Broad-street Theatre, which are, *roughed-out* and shall rechristen it The Lyceum."

brilliant lights in the history of the drama—Edmund Kean, Charles Kean, Tyrone, Power, Macready, Charles and Fanny Kemble, Charles Cushman, James E. Murdock, Fechter, Burton Hackett, and a host of others. By the way, do you know I have studied deeply the history of the early actors and have come to the conclusion that the three who stand out in bold relief as the greatest tragic geniuses are Cooke, Edmund Kean, and the elder Booth. Before them all others must retire and when will an actor again arise that shall be worthy of a fame equal to theirs?"

touched upon, which showed Mr. Clarke to be an exceedingly well-read man, and possessed of discriminating critical power, as well as an actor who ornaments his profession by the talent and care which he gives to all his impersonations; and, with the expression of a hope that he might be induced to give one night of English fare, or world being out "Among the Breakers," and give us an opportunity to witness his infimitable role of *Belding*. *Source* during this week, THE REPUBLICAN thanked Mr. Clarke and bade him good-day.

the company supporting it.

Ford's Opera House has a remarkable one, embracing, as it does, three artists, at least, of whom there is an interesting story in dramatic annals.

First—Mrs. Warren, who in years gone by was star of the first magnitude, and is as well known and kindly remembered by mature playgoers as Mary Anderson is to those of the present generation. Next is Mr. William A. Chapman, a veteran actor of over seventy years of age, who still retains the vigor of his earlier years, and carries to the "old man" parts which are rarely given to the mere "old fish" which men-

by Mr. Sam Humphe, a comedian whose performances have delighted the Philadelphians for over twenty-five years. The people of that city have the same affection and admiration for him that cultured Bostonians have for their idol, William Warren. All of these artists played with Mr. Clarke when he commenced to build his reputation in Philadelphia, and it was a happy thought, as well as a graceful tribute to their worth, that Mr. Clarke should have secured them to support him now in the zenith of his fame.

Nathaniel J. Thayer died suddenly of apoplexy last night at his residence, No. 729 Thirteenth street, having been attacked while going up stairs. Mr. Thayer, who was sixty-one years of age, was born in Massachusetts, practiced law in Baltimore for thirty years, served there as assistant district attorney for a long time, and came here to live last October.
